

IDRC AUTHORS' WORKSHOP, OTTAWA, OCTOBER 16-18*

Rapporteurs: Daniel Norfolk, Bruce Currie-Alder, and Charles Cater

This report summarizes the proceedings from the first of three authors' workshops for the IDRC project on development thought. There were presentations by twenty-two authors for the forthcoming edited volume, the editors, and a Steering Committee member.

I. The Project

Timeline

- Friday, March 30: deadline for submission of draft chapters
- Tuesday, May 1 to Saturday, May 5: second authors' workshop at Bellagio Center; due to capacity constraints for the venue, participants will be limited to 30
- April through June: editors will provide feedback to authors on draft chapters
- Friday, August 31: deadline for submission of final chapters
- September: third authors' workshop at Rockefeller Brother Fund's Pocantico Center in New York (dates and location to be confirmed)
- mid-January, 2013: submission of complete manuscript to the publisher; publication in 2013

The Publisher and the Book

- The Board of Delegates for Oxford University Press has approved the book proposal and the editors are now in the process of finalizing a contract with OUP.
- The working title for the book is currently *Development: Ideas and Experience* (subject to change). The book is projected at 450,000 words and nearly 900 pages.
- OUP will publish the book in hardcover, paperback, and online. The paperback will be priced at £40 in Europe and \$60 in North America, and possibly as low as £15 in India and Africa.
- IDRC will host an online teaching component derived from the volume, including lists for further reading and discussion questions. The authors will be asked to suggest content for this. IDRC intends to retain the right to deposit copies of draft chapters in its digital library.
- In terms of chapter format, the commissioning editor, Adam Swallow, was careful to emphasize a strict limit of 8,000 words per chapter. This includes all notes, bibliography, and tables (which will count as 350 words each). Each chapter should have at most two levels of headings.
- In the preparation of their chapters, authors are requested to note any critical terms that should be included in the volume's index (but may not be readily apparent to a non-expert in the field).
- The editors will provide further guidance to authors in the coming weeks.

* This report, particularly sections III-IX, follows the order and structure of the book's table of contents rather than strictly adhering to the conference agenda and grouping of panels (which were adjusted in a few instances to accommodate the schedules of various participants).

II. The Approach

Opening Comments – David Malone, Rohinton Medhora, and Bruce Currie-Alder

Books on development generally emphasise practice from a compartmentalized perspective; ideas and their application receive inadequate attention. Realizing that the creation of knowledge and the application of ideas are in a sense localized processes, the editors feel that the globalization of ideas also needs to be examined further. The financial crisis has recently functioned as a catalyst for questioning some of the assumptions underlying contemporary approaches to development. Thus, it may be just the right moment for a historical survey of the conceptual landscape of development, looking at the evolution of ideas and how they translate into practice. The editors' approach can be summarized as "history matters, institutions matter, and capacity matters". The book will examine how ideas have evolved, how they have affected where we are now, and how they might inform the future of development.

Observations and Reflections – Gerry Helleiner

Changes in how we discuss development may in fact reflect shifts in the balance of power between various factions of policymakers and practitioners rather than a fundamental reconsideration of the underlying concepts and theories. Should the scope of enquiry merely include those ideas that were most influential in terms of shaping policy and experience or should the analysis be more broadly construed? The edited volume may be perceived according to its particular time and place (i.e. as a product of the 'Western world' and the 'international development project'). There are a few potential gaps to consider: gender, urbanization, primary/secondary education, corporations (transnational and national), socialism, and community development. Overall, the positivist approach of the editors is preferred to a normative approach. Authors should try to avoid prescriptive recommendations for aid donors; conclusions exploring alternative scenarios and possible futures could be more appropriate.

Discussion

In addition to the points discussed above, a few other recurring themes surfaced: chapter structure, periodization, the sources and applicability of models, and the significance of this particular historical juncture. It was agreed that there is not a single structure that will work equally well for all chapters. Rather common elements typically include some historical background, an analysis of how ideas influenced policy and practice (and were then often re-evaluated in light of new evidence), and a forward-looking conclusion. Participants discussed the utility of 'phases' as a way to organize their chapters, but of course the specific periodization will vary according to the subject matter. It was generally acknowledged that emerging countries like Brazil and China are now more likely than Western industrialized countries to be seen as models by other developing countries. However, there was a lack of consensus regarding to what extent the decline of traditional aid donors and the rise of new actors signifies a radical shift in international relations and fundamental changes for processes of development.

III. Critical Issues

The Study of Development – David Williams

There are three notable tensions in the study of development. First, there is a tendency toward generating knowledge and theories that are intended to be widely applicable, but at the same time there is recognition of the specificity regarding particular problems, countries, and periods. The more we know about the specific cases, the less plausible the general theories become. Second, there is a tension regarding what development studies should exactly be about. The field can be defined 'positively' in terms of what it aspires toward (e.g. industrialization and modernization) or 'negatively' in terms of what is missing (e.g. health and education). Third, development studies has always been more multi-disciplinary than inter-disciplinary; with economics being predominant but politics, anthropology, and area studies growing in influence.

Theories of Development – John Harriss

Theories are inherently normative, describing how societies obtain different goals. This chapter identifies the origins of development thinking in the Enlightenment, and traces the historical context surrounding the notion of economic backwardness. Another focus is on the shift since WWII from structural to liberal theories, citing key thinkers and works that exemplify the theories influencing development thought at different times. It will also include reference to thinking on human development, institutionalism, and participation and pluralism. Ultimately, general theory is needed to guide understanding, but one needs to also be wary of its limitations.

State and Market Failure – Shanta Devarajan

Post-WWII development policy can be divided into three general phases. In the first period, it was assumed that government intervention would be needed to mediate and mitigate failures of the market. Aid donors typically identified the problems, designed the solutions, and paid for the projects in newly-independent countries. In the second period, the focus shifted toward undoing these government interventions (although the original problems with the market still existed). The role of the IFIs was amplified because of the oil price shocks and subsequent debt crises, and conditionality now accompanied policy advice and loans. During these phases, the results of development programs were 'mixed' at best (rates of poverty reduction were not increasing). In the current period, there is a recognition that political problems need to be treated as such (rather than conceived as technical issues) and that conditionality has limited effectiveness.

Discussion

How we conceptualize the ethical and moral dimensions of development was raised by a few participants. Other interrelated aspects of the discussion concerned global inequities between industrialized and developing countries and the disproportionate influence of powerful countries over international development policies and international institutions. Some participants noted the relative decline of traditional development actors, donor fatigue among the general public, and shrinking aid budgets in the West, while also highlighting new approaches to development by emerging countries which are frequently based on an explicit recognition of mutual interest.

IV. State and Society

Law and Regulation – Mariana Prado

The field of law and development emerged as a by-product of development assistance in the 1960s. Conceptions of 'law' and 'development' can be 'moving targets' and require explanation. For example, law can be understood as formal rules (i.e. what is on the books), official practices (i.e. what is actually enforced), and social practices (i.e. what people use to guide action). There are challenges posed by the complexity that accompanies eroding conventional dichotomies such as formal and informal institutions, common and civil law, public and private law, and domestic and international law. This leads one to a 'search for meta-principles' that could be applied toward the evolving relationship between law and development, including global administrative law, adaptability theories, and experimentalism.

Corruption – Huguette Labelle

New governments may come to power with good intentions, yet the capacity to govern is limited if corrupt actors and expectations remain. Distinctions can be made between criminal acts that endanger lives, such as diluting vaccines, and ethical dilemmas of rent-seeking, such as bribes demanded by low-paid public servants. High levels of corruption can undermine incentives for hard work. There is a trade-off between quantifying the impact of corruption and identifying workable solutions to it. Politicians often favour their own family or ethnic group at the cost of wider citizenry, but it is unclear how much of this is culturally determined. This chapter could consider enforcement and the judiciary, thus linking with the chapter on law and regulation.

Growth and Inclusion – Albert Berry

While there are connections between income and human satisfaction, growth is frequently accompanied by increasing inequality. The early exceptions were Taiwan and Korea following land reform, and more recently a few countries in the Americas. Growth can also create stress through competition and dissatisfaction if rising expectations are unmet. Countries face new challenges in achieving inclusion, including the need to care for an aging population and erosion of the extended family as a means to share income. Available data focuses on labour income, but little is known about the distribution of capital income. This links with the inequality chapter.

Discussion

Contributions could benefit from treatment of the concepts in historical context. The extent to which these phenomena are symptoms of globalization could be addressed, and the implications of international inequality could also be explored further. Teasing out the linkages between these trends and approaches to development may be useful. Participants inquired about how to establish a baseline and other measurement issues. The influence of local history and culture also came up in the context of discussions regarding law, corruption, and inclusion.

V. Peace and Security

Political Economy of Intrastate Conflict – Dimpho Motsamai

Traditional theories of civil conflict revolved around the turbulent processes of nation-state formation. The escalation of intrastate conflict in the post-Cold War era gave rise to theories that converged on a tripartite formulation of greed, need, and creed. Contemporary theories of intrastate conflict coalesce around the persistent weakness of governance structures, horizontal inequalities, and opportunities for groups to engage in violent conflict. Looking at the African experience, it is possible to address the continuities and discontinuities of major theories surrounding the political economy of conflict, and to concentrate on aspects of development that bolster against the catalysts that provide impetus for collective violence.

Transitional Justice – Pablo de Greiff

Despite proliferating theories of the security-development nexus, the place of justice in the international development agenda has been ambivalent. The Post-WWII expansion of the international human rights architecture, which eventually manifested itself in the establishment of the ICC, has not been accompanied by thinking about development that incorporates justice. Recent developments (embodied by ICTJ interventions and the World Development Report 2011) suggest that justice may be attributed a more important role in preventing countries from succumbing to violence. Transitional justice can be linked to development programming to encourage social mechanisms for affirming norms and reconstituting rights regimes.

Transparency – Charles Cater

Developing countries dependent upon primary commodity exports are typically subject to a 'resource curse' (although countries such as Chile, Botswana, and Malaysia offer significant counter-examples), while transparency has become the principal policy response to conflict and corruption associated with the oil and mining industries. Contemporary institutional manifestations include: UN sanctions regimes, the Kimberley Process, Publish What You Pay, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, World Bank and IMF policies, and the Dodd-Frank Act. Their shared assumption that economic transparency facilitates political accountability has substantial implications for development processes and requires further critical enquiry.

Discussion

There has not been enough analytical work on the links between conflict and development. The idea that inequality and exclusion cause violence is not demonstrably the case, but an assumption, and potentially a dangerous one (what does it tell us about possible interventions?). Similarly, the linkages between transitional justice and development should be pursued further. The Africa-specific nature of the civil conflict chapter should be qualified, and consistent parameters for literature review within the chapters should also be established.

VI. Sustainability and Health

Land – Ben White

Land reforms can be generally understood as an effort to correct historical distortions in land use and ownership. Typically, the intent is to establish a group of middle peasant farmers, along with pursuing other important goals such as justice, food security, accumulation/surplus, and jobs. During the 1960's and 1970s, both capitalist reforms and collectivist reforms were notable for their reinforcement of state sovereignty over land rights. More recently, the FAO and the World Bank have been the most important international agencies working on land reform issues. The World Bank has primarily pursued 'market-led' and 'market-assisted' reforms, but the organization's long-standing advocacy of individual ownership titles is now being re-evaluated. Three current issues require research : gender, age, and corporate 'land grabbing'.

Agriculture and Food Security – Rajul Pandya-Lorch

As a field of development work, agriculture was in decline for two decades until the recent food crisis. In terms of smallholders, there have been stark contrasts among China (major transformation), India (green revolution), Africa (left out), and Brazil (large scale approach). There are four major future themes: embedded poverty, competition (i.e. food, fuel, and fibre), sustainability and climate change, and health and nutrition. As for food security, this concept dates to the 1970s and concerns the right to food, the utilization of food, and the quality of food. Important questions remain regarding the impact of large-scale agriculture on food security and how to address the challenge of population growth when one billion people remain in hunger.

Rural Transformation – Julio Berdegue

Half of the world's population live in rural areas. While conventional narratives discuss trends in terms of expected demographic movements (i.e. rural to urban) and typical economic transformations (i.e. agriculture to manufacturing to services), the reality is more complex. Six factors can be used to frame analysis: diversification from agriculture, urbanization, demographic change, telecommunications and roads, decentralization, and globalization of value chains. The outcomes of rural transformation are highly differentiated between countries and within countries; and localized poverty and inequality traps remain a problem. Yet, the concept and reality of 'rural' is evolving to mean something more than just 'backward'.

Targeting Diseases – Nandini Oomman

Public health has not historically been a development issue, but linked to sanitation and hygiene. With the advent of vaccines, the concept of targeting diseases emerged. The 1960s saw the initial integration of global health into the development agenda. Funding to global health has increased five-fold over the last decade, but targeting specific diseases has not been reconciled with a health systems approach. Vertical approaches to targeting disease do not address non-health factors. Emerging diseases require an integrated approach. Looking forward, new and neglected health issues linked to development (climate change, population growth, food insecurity etc.) will demand global solutions punctuated by targeted ones.

Discussion

Much of the discussion period concerned issues regarding potential overlaps among the chapters and mechanisms for how the authors can share drafts and exchange ideas. A few participants suggested smaller working groups at the next workshop in order to facilitate these processes. In terms of thematic issues, corporate involvement in large-scale land deals in Africa and elsewhere was the principal focus of questions, with some suggesting they may be replicating patterns of colonial plantations and problems associated with enclave economies.

VII. Technology and Innovation

Universities and Higher Education – Bo Göransson

There are three contrasting roles of universities: teaching, research, and contributing to economy and society. How this third mission is defined varies among countries and is influenced by different theories of development and economic growth: it can focus on technology transfer to industry, or the use of knowledge to help the poor. Public education was cut back in structural adjustment, and governments remain wary of brain drain, investing in people who emigrate away. Universities are part of a nation's innovation system, linked to broader issues of education, vocational training and capacity building.

Industrial Policy – Michele Di Maio

There have been historical shifts in industrial policy from being at the heart of a developmental state, to being neglected under the Washington Consensus. Industrial policy is experiencing a renaissance with different opportunities to participate in value chains stretching between countries. It lies at the crossroads of many topics: manufacturing, trade, economics and education, suggesting a need to link with authors on these topics as well as on particular countries. The role of politics is also important, particularly regarding policymaking, the perceptions about the merits of markets, and the role of government in the private sector.

ICTs – Ronaldo Lemos

There is a contrast between technology interests of people at the 'top' and 'bottom' of income pyramid, and the use of ICTs among the poor. There are more LAN-houses in Brazil than either libraries or movie theaters, creating a new public space where people work and play. Rather than government policy, the widespread use of technology is driven by entrepreneurs tapping unmet demand. Keeping costs low requires attention not just to infrastructure, but where content is created and located. Poor countries face substantial costs as they receive much more information from the outside world than they send out into it.

Incentives and Innovation – David Brook

Development challenges have a significant impact on global health and health equity. Innovative approaches must be developed for channelling multiple efforts towards problems that governments alone cannot tackle. The Grand Challenges approach locates specific problems and decontextualizes them from the broader conceptual framework of development, so that they can be analysed in an explicitly non-theoretical, solutions-based exercise. This offers a tool for global governance, rather than a methodology. The approach looks to develop a market, and on the basis of the market, brings in innovators. It is likely that countries within the G20 will push for emerging markets to create their own grand challenge programs.

Discussion

A tension was noted between focusing on the thinking of powerful decision-makers versus the thinking of academics and practitioners. Development thought was understood as ideas that contribute to the practice of development, which may not match the ideas conveyed in school. Participants saw a role for primary and secondary education in the volume: either as a separate chapter, within the chapter on universities, or integrated into other chapters. Participants also encouraged the inclusion of examples from other countries (e.g. India and Nigeria) and beyond ICTs (e.g. health and water) with respect to how technologies reach poor people.

VIII. Countries

Chile – Carlos Vergara

Development involves a particular relationship between state, markets, and society; the way they interact often frames the process. The development of Chile can be analysed through the prisms of democracy, economy, social cohesion, and institutional capacity. Chile's rich democratic history was interrupted by a military coup. The ensuing dictatorship dismantled Chile's import-substitution model, opening its economy to international competition and restructuring its production around exports (prefiguring the Washington Consensus). With the return of civilian government in 1990, Chile had recourse to previously existing democratic mechanisms, but had to reconcile these with its neoliberal economic structure. The challenge has been to move from a concept of development based on economic growth to an emphasis on inclusive development and reconstituting democratic institutional capacity.

South Africa – Audrey Verdier-Chouchane

Economic growth in South Africa has resulted in significant disparities. There is discord between the strong pro-poor, inclusive policies enacted by the government and the facts on the ground. Following apartheid, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) embodied elements of a 'developmental state': promoting social, economic, and political inclusiveness where markets failed to do so, and complementing those market forces conducive to inclusive growth. South Africa's regional integration and trade strategy have allowed the country to grow considerably. However, positive growth has not had a corresponding impact on equality. The challenge remains to determine what measures could encourage inclusiveness.

Discussion

Rising inequality has been a global phenomenon over this period. It is therefore important to distinguish between what is case-specific and what is part of an international trend. Each case could benefit from a treatment of how development thought affected policy. This is particularly true for South Africa, where efforts to promote inclusiveness outweighed those of any other country, yet achieved limited results. Interestingly, Chile demonstrates how poverty reduction brings new challenges. Successes in terms of human development create higher expectations amongst more people. In terms of comparative analysis, South Africa could perhaps be usefully assessed in relation to either Chile or Brazil.

IX. Actors

Foundations and Private Actors – Yulya Spantchak

Private sources of development assistance are transforming the concept and delivery of foreign aid. Quantitative analysis reveals that private financial flows account for the majority of aid absorbed by the developing world. Simultaneously, indigenous philanthropy in developing countries is on the rise, contributing to local ownership and encouraging local civil society. These trends are linked to new mechanisms for mobilizing development resources, resulting in the increased focus on partnerships as opposed to the traditional donor-recipient relationship, and an emphasis on the mutuality of responsibility and accountability. Consequently, governments can play a new role by facilitating and convening resources in the private sector, and communicating best practices to other development players.

World Trade Organization – Cintia Quiliconi

The WTO's value has moved from liberalizing trade to resolving disputes among members. Developing countries have moved from seeking preferential access to developed-country markets to fostering South-South trade. They also moved from seeking differentiated status to instead accept the same agreements as advanced economies, albeit with more time and technical assistance to implement them. Development has not figured high in the WTO agenda, yet WTO agreements have implications for the opportunities open to developing countries. The plurality of negotiating positions has evolved beyond a simple North-South dichotomy.

Consultative Forums – Jorge Heine

The ascent of emerging economies has given rise to a shift in the global economic order and, by extension, the global development system. This shift is evident at the level of ideas, actors, and institutional arrangements. The emergence of alternative development consultation forums – IBSA, 'BRICS', and the G20 (Leaders) – reflects not only the world's changing economic landscape, but the failure of the OECD-DAC to respond to these changes. 'BRICS' countries are not inclined to join the DAC framework. Instead, the rising donor states are beginning to reshape the norms, principles, and best practices of global development.

Discussion

The wider implications of the increasing prominence of private actors in development assistance should be explored. The private/philanthropic sector embodies diverse ideas about development, but how can these be reconciled with dominant discourses? Similarly, philanthropic actors do not operate the same way as governments; something could be said about these differences. In the discussion on consultative forums, aid can be used as a proxy, but the analysis should not be limited to aid as there is room to cover other relevant areas. Finally, as the BRICS have ascended, there has been a tendency to play the developing country role where it suits them (e.g. at the WTO) while also demanding a greater voice in other forums.

X. Conclusion

- While accepting that no single template can be used to guide each individual chapter, some authors noted that the evolution of development thought generally corresponds to broad historical phases. An articulation of these periods might help structure chapters.

- Editors and authors also discussed the importance of finding the right balance between historical synthesis, contemporary analysis, and forward looking conclusions. This will vary according to topic, but all three aspects should be integral parts for most chapters.

- Author opinions varied regarding the implications of this particular historical juncture for development thinking and processes. Some emphasised that the emergence of certain developing countries and the relative decline of traditional powers marks a watershed moment. Other authors noted that it is human nature to assume that the present is singularly important.

- Nonetheless, it is probably true that developing countries are now more likely to look toward emerging countries such as China and Brazil as models for development rather than the industrialized countries of Europe or North America. There are also inherent limits to what extent development models (of whatever origin) can be successfully replicated elsewhere.

- The editors and Steering Committee agree that the volume should take a positivist (rather than normative) approach and that the chapters should mostly avoid prescriptive conclusions. On the other hand, the inherently normative content of development theorizing was also mentioned, and brief policy recommendations may be appropriate for some topics.

- Inevitably, opinions on how to define development varied. This is not necessarily problematic, given that the volume is intentionally geared toward representing a wide range of perspectives. The editors value differing outlooks among the authors. Through the exchange of ideas among a diverse group of participants, new and useful insights may emerge.

- Attempts to assess development raise difficult questions about appropriate baselines, benchmarks, categories, and criteria for measurement. This was a recurring, cross-cutting theme across several panels and presentations.